



Afternoon Alert - Friday, September 29, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most broadcasters gave top play to a meeting this morning between Democratic Party President Maehara and Party of Hope leader Koike, at which they discussed the details of a planned “merger” of their parties.

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Tillerson to hold talks with top Chinese officials

NHK reported that during his four-day visit to China through Sunday, Secretary of State Tillerson will be meeting with President Xi, State Counsellor Yang, and Foreign Minister Wang, quoting the Secretary as telling the press in Washington on Thursday that he plans to talk to them about the agenda for President Trump’s upcoming visit to China. He went on to say, “We’ll continue our discussions on a number of other issues that are important, and certainly North Korea will be on the table for discussion.” The public broadcaster also took up congressional testimony given on Thursday by Acting Assistant Secretary Thornton, in which she expressed concern about North Korea’s relentless pursuit of capabilities to attack the U.S. mainland with nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. The senior U.S. diplomat, who will be accompanying the Secretary to Beijing, also said that the success of the strategy of pressure against Pyongyang depends on close cooperation from international partners, especially Beijing.

Japan conveys concern over comfort woman statue’s designation as “public object”

NHK reported online on press remarks this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who disclosed that the GOJ has conveyed to the ROK government its concern that a district authority in Seoul recently designated the comfort woman statue in front of the Japanese Embassy a “public object.” Calling the move “extremely regrettable,” the government spokesman stressed that it runs counter to the 2015 bilateral comfort women accord and may cause the memorial to remain in place permanently.

- [Foreign media react to Koike’s new party](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan, China leaders swap messages on 45th anniv. of diplomatic ties](#) (Kyodo News)
- [China praises Abe’s attendance to its national day ceremony](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

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| POLITICS |
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Koike says some DP members will not be accepted in Party of Hope

All TV networks highlighted remarks made to the press by Tokyo Governor Koike this morning after her meeting with Democratic Party President Maehara, at which Maehara presented a list of DP Diet members who would like to join Koike’s Party of Hope. The Tokyo governor said: “We will examine all the applications individually with various criteria in mind to check whether each of them should be accepted as party candidates Our party has absolutely no intention to accept all of the applications.” The reports said some DP politicians, including former Prime Minister Noda, have already decided not to join the Party of Hope and run in the race as “independents.” TV-Asahi speculated that the applications of one-third of DP parliamentarians might be rejected. In the same press availability, Koike underscored that she will not run in the upcoming election. However, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga predicted this morning that the governor will run in the election.

In a related story, several broadcasters reported that Governor Koike will hold a joint press conference with her Osaka and Aichi counterparts tomorrow to announce mutual cooperation in the Oct. 22 general election. Aichi Governor Omura has been asked by the Party of Hope to run in the election as a party candidate.

- [Prime minister’s schedule on Sept. 28, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Koike’s remarks on Party of Hope’s policies on Sept. 28](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gist of DP chief Maehara’s remarks at general meeting of Diet members on Sept. 28](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Full translation of PM Abe’s remarks after Lower House dissolution on Sept. 28](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [Cartoon: Script for the new political theater](#) (Mainichi)
- [FOCUS: Views mixed over Abe's election gamble amid N. Korea threat](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Column on how newspapers reported sudden Lower House dissolution for election](#) (Asahi)
- ["Anti-Abe" alliance to be a nightmare for PM Abe](#) (Sankei)
- [Race to jump on Koike bandwagon gathers steam](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Statements by party leaders following Lower House dissolution](#) (Asahi)
- [A MOD official to run in election from Party of Hope](#) (Asahi)
- [Maehara's merger proposal with Party of Hope sparks anxiety and doubt within DP](#) (Asahi)
- [Cartoon: Koike and Maehara](#) (Asahi)
- [Polarization of opposition cooperation in Lower House election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Over 1,000 candidates to run in Lower House election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Strength of in-house groups in House of Representatives at time of dissolution](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Situation in DP becoming even more fluid with lower house dissolution](#) (The Japan News)
- [Maverick Foreign Minister Kono unnerves the bureaucrats](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Gov't plans to use 1.7 trillion yen from tax increase for human resources development](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Supreme Court ruling on vote value disparity a call to greater efforts](#) (The Mainichi)

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| ECONOMY |
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- [Aso considers companies' ballooning internal reserves problematic](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. beef imports dropped 26% in August due to safeguard measures](#) (Mainichi)
- [Hino to invest 100 m. dlrs in U.S. to beef up truck production](#) (Jiji Press)

- [Terumo opens brain catheter hub in U.S.](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan's biz leaders push for raising sales tax beyond 10%](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Toyota, Mazda, Denso team up to develop EV tech](#) (Jiji Press)
- [50% rise in imported rice price due to high demand from food-service industry](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

Increase in “ownerless land” makes urban development difficult

NHK's “Close-up Gendai +” highlighted the current phenomenon of “ownerless land” in Japan. According to a government estimate, the combined amount of property in Japan for which the owners cannot be identified or located exceeds the size of the main island of Kyushu. As farmland and plots in mountainous areas have depreciated in value, many people feel they are not worth inheriting so they remain unregistered. Such ownerless land is also found in urban areas nowadays, making it difficult for local government authorities to collect asset taxes and carry out urgent public works projects such as landslide mitigation since consent from the landowner is mandatory for performing such work.

- [Tokyo Gov. Koike to appoint 1st female vice governor in 22 yrs](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Lawyerless Turk challenges Osaka car dealer's snub of non-Japanese patrons, wins redress](#) (The Japan Times)

SECURITY

Navy's missile detection ship departs Sasebo

TV-Asahi reported that the USNS Howard O. Lorenzen, a missile range instrumentation ship, departed Sasebo Naval Base yesterday for an unspecified destination, speculating that the U.S. has probably detected signs pointing to an imminent ballistic missile launch by North Korea. The network explained that all three times the Navy's state-of-the-art missile detection-tracking vessel has departed from Sasebo this year -- in April, May, and July -- North Korea has launched a missile a few days later.

In a related development, several broadcasters took up recent commercial satellite imagery indicating that North Korea continues to work on its second submersible test stand barge for its submarine-launched ballistic missile program at the Nampo Navy Shipyard on the country's west coast.



- [72% of Okinawans say Ospreys are “dangerous,” Ryukyu Shimpo poll](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
 - [50% of Futenma area residents say they have sleep disturbances because of Ospreys, Ryukyu Shimpo poll](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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